



OBITUARY: JOY KERSLAKE, 1915-1985.

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Joy (Josephine Adele), the only child of Adelaide and Claude Ollivier, was born on the 29th of July, 1915. Her mother died when she was very young and she was raised by her aunt Isabelle Gillies. Although never gregarious as a child and teenager, her many interests absorbed her. She also had an ability then, as later, to make lifelong friendships. She attended the Warrawee and Chatswood public schools but did not receive a secondary education because she was considered to be "too delicate". Her lack of formal education, however, was more than compensated for by her enquiring mind and prodigious reading.

As a child, most of her holidays were spent camping. This helped to give her a love of nature that developed and lasted all of her life. On leaving school Joy was employed as a bookkeeper at Hoyts Theatres, attending The Royal Art Society School at night. Always an avid collector, she started with beetles and butterflies, and then, while at Hoyts, photos of film stars. Later on she developed collections and acquired information about old cards, wedding photos, cacti, old lace, early music covers and shells.

She was always interested in art and studied formal art at the Royal Art Society and Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney. This interest developed into her particular interests in Australian pottery, Nineteenth Century greeting cards and bridal fashions through photographs.

The marriage of Joy Ollivier and Dick Kerslake in 1945 was a happy one and brought new interests and two stepdaughters. Dick's enthusiasm for native plants soon had Joy involved in a new interest but a major focus on weekend trips and holidays was shell collecting. One extended trip to New Caledonia in May-August, 1950 had a special interest because Joy's grandfather had been in business in Noumea. A serious attack of tuberculosis in 1952 hospitalised her for many months following a camping trip to uninhabited North West Island, Queensland. An earlier attack of the same disease had afflicted her in the late 1930's while she was attending night classes at Art School.

Joy commenced as a volunteer for the Australian Museum in September 1958, when D.F. McMichael was curator. The department was then frequented by two retired curators, Tom Iredale and Joyce Allan, and enthusiasts, such as Tom Garrard, Charles Laseron, Gertrude Thornley, Jacques Voorwinde and Phil Colman. Joy's attention to detail and considerable knowledge of molluscs made her invaluable. During this time she developed an interest in wentle traps (Epitoniidae) and acquired an excellent collection and knowledge of them. The extensive catalogue of this group that she built up, and her collection of epitoniids, are now housed in the Australian Museum.

A move to Melbourne, due to a promotion for Dick, saw her volunteering in the National Museum of Victoria (now The Museum of Victoria). During this period she decided to donate her large bivalve collection to the Western Australian Museum to assist that museum in building up a comparative collection of eastern Australian shells. After the Kerslakes' return from Melbourne,

following Dick's retirement in 1968, their predominant interest was in developing their garden. However, Joy made sporadic visits to help at the Australian Museum. Following Dick's death in 1973, Joy again became heavily involved in helping in the Australian Museum, often for two or three days a week. She also spent a considerable amount of time at home sorting shells from samples and checking manuscripts for one of us. During this period she concentrated on curating and developing the museum's bivalve collection which, before she started, had been large but almost unusable. It is now one of the finest collections of Indo-west Pacific bivalves in the world and is used by many visitors, both professional and amateur. Most of the credit for the curation and development of this important collection must go to Joy.

The Kerslake shell collection (with the exception of the majority of the bivalves as mentioned above) is housed in the Australian Museum along with those of the other dedicated amateurs with whom she shared her early days in the mollusc department.

Somehow, Joy also found time between museum visits to volunteer for UNICEF in Sydney from 1974-1984, doing bookkeeping tasks and establishing archives of the greeting card operation.

Joy published eight small papers on molluscs, all between the years 1954-1969. She felt, quite inappropriately, that her abilities were not up to the task of publishing more comprehensive work and consequently many of the ideas that she formulated after long and diligent study are essentially lost. However, her notes on molluscs are now in the Australian Museum, as are many comments on labels scattered through the bivalve collections. These, together with her own large and important collections now housed in the Australian and Western Australian Museums, will insure that her presence will continue to be felt.

Joy will be remembered by all of us who had anything to do with her for her quiet, unassuming manner, her depth of interest and knowledge, and the help and encouragement that she so freely gave.

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